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(2) THE MADRAS PROHIBITION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1948
(L.A. BILL No. 11 OF 1948).

* THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ Sir, I move that—
the Madras Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1948 (L.A. Bill No. 11 of 1948), as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration at once.”

The Bill is more or less a simple measure and it is intended to meet administrative difficulties. Clause 1 is a formal clause which prescribes the time when the various sections of the Bill shall come into force. Clause 2 provides for transport of liquor by road as well as by rail. Under the present clause 17, sub-clause (b), there is authority to transport liquor by railway administrations but not by road. It is intended that authority should be extended to transport by road as well. Clause 3 provides for exemption of the armed forces of the Dominion. There was an Act as passed by the Madras Government under the Advisers' regime, exempting members of the armed forces of the Dominion from the provisions of the Act. That Act ceased to be in force. It is now sought to make that general exemption to be applicable to members of the armed forces for a period of two years. It is hoped that after the expiry of this period, the Government of India may fall in line with the prohibition policy of the Government of Madras and there will be no need to exempt the armed forces from the Prohibition Act. Clause 4 provides for issue of licences to persons who possess and issue liquor to persons who hold permits. At the present time, as hon. Members of the House may be aware, permits are given to certain persons in special circumstances for the purpose of possessing and taking liquor. Until now, only certain parts of our Province have been dry. Therefore it is open to permit-holders to go to places where liquor is available and to purchase it. When the whole Province becomes dry, permission has to be given to persons in dry areas to possess liquor and issue it to those holding permits or licences. I, therefore, submit that this Bill is quite necessary and my motion may be accepted by the House.”

MR. CHAIRMAN :—“ The question is that—

the Madras Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1948 (L.A. Bill No. 11 of 1948), as passed by the Legislative Assembly, be taken into consideration at once.”

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Sir, I cannot congratulate the Government on the consistency with which they introduce legislation. Some years ago they passed an Act, the Madras Prohibition Act of 1937. The principle of that Act is that drinking is bad and an evil and that drinking leads to drunkenness. That Bill was drafted and passed through both the Houses. They took up the position that for anybody, drinking was bad. Now this country is in trouble and we are very much in need of the support of the

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armed forces. On them we depend for the security of the country. What do our Government propose to do? The Government want this House to pass an Act to give power to them to exempt the armed forces from the provisions of the Act. They want to permit the armed forces of the Dominion of India to take to drinking. I put it the other way. Is it proper for the Government of this Province, who are convinced that drinking is bad and should be prohibited in the Province, to allow the armed forces of the Crown to drink alcohol and suffer. The Government are not consistent in bringing forward this piece of legislation. If they are consistent and if they think that drinking is bad, they should be the first persons to see that there is strict enforcement of the Act and that the armed forces of the Crown on whom we depend for the security of the State are not exempted. On the other hand, my hon. Friend, the Minister, seems to think that it is very much to the good of the armed forces of the Crown and that it is conducive to their health to drink. Therefore, having no power to exempt them from the provisions of the Act, he has brought forward this Bill to enable the Government to allow the armed forces of the Crown to drink.

4 p.m.

" I say, Sir, there is not only no consistency, but there does not seem to be honesty in the previous Bill which admitted that drinking was bad and therefore it was prohibited. Now, Sir, I ask, if drinking was bad to the health of the armed forces of the Government, why should they be allowed to be ruined? Why do you want this power to exempt them? You believe it is good for them to drink and therefore, having no power to exempt them, you now want power to exempt them. I say, Sir, that if they believe in their intentions which guided the previous Bill, then, Sir, this Bill ought not to have been introduced.

" Now, Sir, there is another thing, which the Government confess. They confess not only they do not believe in the previous Bill, but they want the armed forces of the Crown should be healthy, energetic and therefore they want them to drink and want power to allow them to drink. Sir, I do not want to put the case higher than that.

" Sir, let us go further. The primary function of a Government should be this, and I want the Hon. Home Minister's attention to this and I shall wait till he finishes his conversation. Sir, the other day there was a ruling in the Assembly that members of the House should not even read books in that House. I want the attention of the Hon. Home Minister to what I am going to say, because it will interest him since he is in charge of order and security. Although the law did not allow them to drink from the passing of Act XXV of 1946, that is, from the 1st of October 1946, and although it has been in force from that day, the Act has clearly ceased to be in force from that date, as in practice the exemption has been regarded as continuing. That means, Sir, the Hon.

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Home Minister has allowed an infringement of the law from 1st October 1946 up to this time and they want that to be legalized. Sir, what was the Government doing when they passed the previous Act? Why should they not have enforced it on all, on the armed forces and on everybody including the Members of the Government, Congress members, members of the Opposition and the public? A law when once it is passed, should not be a respecter of persons. Now, Sir, there is a confession by the Hon. Minister who is responsible for this Bill that although the armed forces of the Crown came under the ban of the Act prohibiting them from drinking, still in practice, they allowed them to drink. Is this a Government keeping law and order in the Province? They come with this naked statement and they want to legalize an illegality which they were doing from the 1st of October 1946. I think, Sir, the Government cannot congratulate themselves on asking the Houses of the Legislature to give them permission to legalize an illegality to which they were responsible for such a long period. I, therefore, say, Sir, that this Act, which again is operative only till 1st October 1948, need not have been brought in at all and the time of this House, as well as of the other House, should not have been taken up. When they have continued this illegality for these two years, they could as well have continued it till 1st October 1948. Why take up the time of the House in introducing a Bill and passing it into an Act which will be in force only till 1st October 1948? Is it to legalize an illegality which they have allowed for so long a period as to-day? Because the Government have not got anything further than Bills like this questioning the purpose of a previous Bill, legalizing an illegal Act, they take up the time of this House and the other House in introducing such Bills. Sir, there is no use opposing this Bill or proposing an amendment, but I want this House to know how the time of the House is taken up. As my hon. Friend has stated, this is not a serious Bill. This is by itself proof of the insincerity of the previous Act, and they confess that for two years they were doing something illegal. Sir, they were doing something illegal before their very eyes and in practice it was never objected to. I say this Government could very well have kept quiet and allowed this practice for a few months more till the time this Bill if passed will be operative, i.e., till 1st October 1948. I say with great respect to my learned friend, this Bill is a useless waste of time so many times."

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" You have wasted the time so many times."

* ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Mr. Chairman, Sir, if drink is bad for the common people, it must be much more so in the case of the armed forces of the country. Now, Sir, the feeling is gaining ground among the people that the loss of revenue of 17 crores of rupees annually is nothing but a propaganda stunt. People feel that the Government are not really

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anxious. (The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan : 'Question.'). You may question it, there may be questions in this House, but every man in the street outside asks the question how this Government are justified in losing 17 crores of rupees and how this responsible Government is allowing the responsible officers of the army and members of the army to carry on drinking, while the other people are prevented from doing so. Let me draw the attention of the House to one important factor with regard to this. This country after we have attained Independence is not at peace. As a matter of fact, we are entangled in various directions—I do not want to mention the directions—and the situation out of the country is also very serious. I do not want to take this House to the situation outside in detail but from what we read in the newspapers, the news is not very happy and there are preparations everywhere in the other continents. America is preparing, Russia is preparing and preparations are being made in various parts of the world for the preservation of peace or to put it more bluntly for war. Such being the case, is our army to be simply allowed to drink, rest and enjoy and be hilarious when on occasions they have to be serious. That is the question that every man in the street is putting to this Government and what is the reply, Sir? The reply must be the reply of a responsible Government. You know, Sir, as well as I do, that because this Government have a majority in this House and in the other House they are able to carry things without caring for what is going to happen to them and to the general public when they go through the general elections. Whatever may be the result of it, Sir, the sincerity and honesty of a party must depend not on what it is going to do afterwards, but on what is happening to-day. The duty of a responsible party or a responsible Minister is not to see what is happening before you are elected to the Legislature in the next elections, but you must first satisfy your conscience. You must see whether drink is bad or good and if it is good, it must be good for the army and for everybody in the country. If it is bad, it must be bad for all, as well as the army. Sir, army must not be allowed to rest and be hilarious; they must not be allowed to enjoy; they must always be ready to protect the country, both in times of peace and during times of war. That must be its duty. If you are going to allow the army to drink, the question that the ordinary man will put to you and to the members of the Legislature and to the responsible people outside is, how dare you try to lose 17 crores of rupees when you are allowing the armed forces to drink. Instead of allowing the people to get this 17 crores why do you burden the country with heavy taxation. Then, Sir, the poor man who is not having his food and clothing, is deprived of all necessities and amenities on account of your wretched policy of Prohibition. Why did you have this policy at all. I say, Sir, so far as I am concerned, I am certainly in favour of Prohibition. As a Muslim, I am in favour of Prohibition; as an Indian, I am in favour of Prohibition. (The Hon. Mr. Daniel Thomas : 'Then why do

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you say it is a wretched policy? ') No, Sir, it is a wretched policy on the part of those people who seek Prohibition in the case of certain people and allow others to drink. It is then that the policy becomes wretched. It is a sacred policy so far as I am concerned, but you do not want people to follow this sacred policy. I am of course the follower of this sacred policy. (The Hon. Mr. Daniel Thomas: 'Sudden conversion?'). It is not sudden conversion, Sir. It is a conversion which happened more than thirteen hundred years ago. I was converted before I was born. My people were converted to this policy before they were born. We are prevented from touching even a drop of alcohol or liquor. That is our policy. I am glad this Government has taken upon itself to enforce that policy in this country. But unfortunately though we find that the policy is there, there is only lip-sympathy shown to the people and there is only propaganda and nothing but that. Because you are thinking that when next you go to the polls, you want to tell them, we have prevented people from drinking, we have preserved the health of the people and advocate the policy of Prohibition. But, what about the health of the army, which has got to be always alert and cautious? Well, Sir, if you are not going to allow the army to be strong, in that case, what I say is, this 17 crores of rupees are an extravagant waste and a great loss to the poor man who is unable to bear the burden. You must confess that there is no half-way-house in this Bill. Either you must confess that drink is good and in that case you should not lose 17 crores and if on the other hand, you say that drinking is bad, you should say, that no member of the army should drink. After all, is it going to improve them? No. On the other hand, they will lose the battle if you allow them to drink. If you allow an officer of the army to drink, he will be hilarious and become unconscious for a period when he will not be in a position to lead his army and when the enemy takes hold of the officer and his army, this House and all the Ministers will perhaps present an address to the army that enters this country. Such being the case, Sir, I want the Government to let us know whether drink is good or bad. As the Leader of my party has said, there is inconsistency in the policy of asking the armed forces to drink and preventing the people from drinking. If they think there is consistency in their policy, I would ask the Government at least to realize what the people outside will say. They will laugh at us to scorn and say, what is this Legislature that is preventing the poor people from drinking and themselves asking the armed forces to drink.

" There is one other point before I close, Sir, and that is in regard to the licences. Why should there be licences to rich people for drinking? The Hon. Minister for Prohibition has stated that if the whole area is not made dry, people may go to other places where liquor is sold and again enter into dry areas and begin to drink: and if that is prevented, then the whole country becomes dry. The fate of these people becomes pitiable and the

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Hon. Minister wants to have pity on them and says let those people have some little drink. That is his sympathy for these people. I do not of course object to his sympathy for people, provided the Hon. Minister thinks that drink is good. If it is not good, even for the sake of the dying patient, I will not allow it. Of course, that is my belief.

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“ Mr. Chairman, it may be a different thing to be a doctor. There are people who can understand things by commonsense. I can give you one instance though it may not be relevant to the point now under discussion. My father was in a semi-conscious state. A doctor who visited him prescribed some brandy for him. My father nodded his head signifying that he would not have it even a few minutes before his death. These are the things which should weigh with the Minister in carrying out the policy of prohibition. I can quote instances after instances where people do not drink even though they are advised to take it. If a man is going to die, a little bit of brandy will not certainly help him and conversely if he does not take it, it is not as if he will die. What I beg to submit is that such distinctions, discriminations and invidious distinctions should not be made in the case of rich people. Therefore, I say that these licences should not be given. Licences and permits should not be given and liquor, under no circumstances, be sold. I feel that there is inconsistency in the policy that the Government is adopting regarding prohibition. If it is intended to benefit people of the country, the people must realize that this Government is the people's Government and that they would not draw distinctions between the rich and the poor, between the army personnel and the ordinary individual. There is no distinction in a free country between an army man and an ordinary citizen. In a free country every citizen must be a member of the army. Whenever a fighting arises, every member of the public including your goodself should go to the front and help the army to fight the enemy against coming in. Therefore, there should be no distinction between the army and the ordinary citizen. If the Government really feels that prohibition is a good thing, that people should be prevented from drink, this Act is a redundant Act; it is unnecessary and, on the contrary, violates the very principle for which this Government stands committed. I, therefore, oppose strongly this amending Bill and feel that this Government must realize that these are the things which are going to do them very great harm when they come to face the electorate next time.”

* THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition has led the attack in this matter and it has been followed up by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is new to his office and there is a famous saying in Tamil, which I do not want to quote on the floor of the House, but in the beginning of his leadership he is indeed very vigorous in opposing the Bill. He himself conceded at the end of his speech that the whole thing is a waste of time. I entirely agree with him in the matter. In fact, I would have expected the Bill being gone through without any attack at all. There was a vigorous

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attack as to why the army should be given facilities. Let me tell him that the army is maintained by the Dominion of India and their disposal, stationing and commissariat arrangements are under the control of the Government of India and are generally under their charge. What the Government seeks to do is, if the Government of India authorizes the military people to be given liquor, necessary exemptions for that purpose should be given. We do not ask the military people to drink. There is no direction to them to that end. Only if the Government of India, the supreme authority in this country, which disposes of the forces within any prohibition area in our Province, make arrangements that their forces within any prohibition area should be supplied with liquor—it is a matter which falls within their responsibility and it finally rests in the hands of the Central Government—then, we say that they should be given exemption."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Mr. Chairman, is the Government of India, a Congress Government, wedded to prohibition principles? "

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" Mr. Chairman, I am sorry the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is not aware of the simple fact. I am sorry it has fallen to me to enlighten the Leader of the Opposition on such simple and elementary matters. I think these are matters too well-known to any person in this country to be explained. It is that the whole Government of India is a Congress Government actuated by Congress ideals. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition must be aware that we are an administering body and the governing body and therefore our measures are implemented in due time and in the proper context. The responsibility for placing these forces and placing these armies in particular areas, making provision for their food, drink and other things is the concern of the Government of India and therefore, it is, when the Government of India allow their forces to imbibe liquor, Government of Madras has a duty in this matter to exempt those forces from the necessary provisions of the Prohibition Act. My hon. Friend Dr. John says that we are inconsistent in our policy, viz., that we are, on the one hand, enforcing prohibition and at the same time are making people drink. If he had seen the Bill, he would have noted that we are now extending this Act only up to the first day of October 1948, viz., two years from the 1st October 1946, so that according to this provision of the present Bill, the exemption will be enforced on and up to the first day of October 1948. As it is, it has been decided that the whole Province will go dry on the 2nd October 1948 and so it is consistent with the policy that the whole Province should go dry. With that object, the Government is fixing 1st October 1948 as the outer date for exemptions so that the army may fall in line with the general policy. We hope and trust that the Central Government will fall in line with the general prohibition policy of the Madras Government and make the force dry on and after 1st October 1948. I submit, therefore, that there is absolutely no question of inconsistency. I would submit that this attitude of fastening arguments of inconsistency is the result of

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the narrow-minded outlook of some lawyers. Dr. John himself, as a lawyer, knows that fastening arguments on inconsistencies is the practice of certain lawyers in the mufassal areas."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" I protest against the Hon. Minister's insinuation that lawyers are narrow-minded; my friend was a lawyer and is a lawyer and I protest against the insinuation."

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" I yield to none in my regard for the dignity of the legal profession. But what I said was that lawyers fastening their arguments on inconsistencies where none exists, instead of directing their attention to wider and larger issues, would be narrow-mindedness and I have the greatest respect and honour for the members of the legal profession that do not look at things in that manner."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Let the Hon. Minister take over the charge of narrow-mindedness upon himself being a lawyer."

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" I am glad, Sir, I do not belong to that tribe at all."

" Then the question was raised how the law had been allowed to be broken from the 1st October 1946. If you look at the provisions of the Prohibition Act of 1937, exemptions were provided and for licences to be issued. From 1937, the Board of Revenue have been issuing licences to canteen-holders enabling them to distribute liquor. Instead of giving it to individual canteen-holders, what we now seek is a general provision by which the members of the armed forces would be exempted from the operations of the Prohibition Act. Instead of carrying on the present practice, we think, as a matter of administrative convenience, a general provision like this should be useful and advantageous; there is no point at all in the argument advanced that there has been a breach of the law."

" Coming to the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I fully share with him in his enthusiasm for prohibition. The Congress Ministry yield to none in their enthusiasm for the policy of prohibition; we are not moralists but we are administrators and that is why even in the Act of 1937 when the Hon. C. Rajagopalachari moved the Prohibition Bill in the Legislative Assembly enunciating the policy of prohibition, he also included provisions in it for exemptions, permits and licences. Dr. John, the Leader of the Opposition, certainly knows that for certain religious communities, namely, the Catholics, a certain quantity of wine in connexion with their religious practices has been permitted. Who is to store and who is to distribute these and the alcohol required for industrial purposes? Alcohol is used not merely for purpose of drink but for industrial and scientific purposes. There are many colleges and hospitals, and industrial institutions for whom alcohol in certain quantities is necessary. And that is why provision for exemption was made therein."

" Mr. Chairman, with reference to permits given to certain class of persons, my hon. Friend was indignant and angry."

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DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Mr. Chairman, righteously angry.”

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ Mr. Chairman, it is rather unrighteous anger, because he wanted to use it for mere opposition. If it was distinterested righteousness and anger combined, I can appreciate the position. I am sorry that it was not so. He wants to pervert the position as a means of attacking the Government and therefore, it is really unrighteous and such sort of opposition is immoral. So far as the question of permits to individuals is concerned, the Government yield to none in their desire to limit and at the same time, in course of time, abolish these licences. My hon. Friend, the Deputy Leader himself, said that some doctor advised that brandy should be given to his father. Regarding certificates from District Medical Officers that alcohol is necessary for certain kind of diseases, I have referred the matter to the Surgeon-General for his authoritative opinion as to the nature of the cases for which a prescription of alcohol is necessary and I am awaiting his report and on receipt of his report, Government will take necessary action to cut down or abolish the grant of liquor permits to any private individuals. My hon. Friend castigates the Government saying, why is this distinction between the rich and the poor. I do not know to what class my hon. friend classifies himself; whether he would call himself rich or poor.

“ Mr. Chairman, poverty is not a vice but hypocrisy is a vice. I would say that it is not a question as between the rich and the poor but the sick and the hale and healthy.

“ I would also submit that so far as Europeans are concerned, they have been all along staying in this country and they are going to stay hereafter as our guests. They are accustomed to this for a long time and therefore for the time being we have accepted to give licences for meeting the needs of the Europeans, and we do not want to enforce Prohibition in their cases also. In these circumstances, I do submit that the position taken by the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quite understandable to me. Government will do everything that is possible for limiting, controlling and abolishing it in course of time. 4-30 p.m.

“ Therefore, Sir, so far as the principle of the Bill is concerned or the various clauses of the Bill are concerned, no point has been made out by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition. So I move that the Bill as passed by the Assembly be taken into consideration.”

MR. CHAIRMAN :—“ The question is—

‘ that the Madras Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1948 (L.A. Bill No. 11 of 1948), as passed by the Assembly be taken into consideration.’ ”

The motion was put and carried and the Bill was taken into consideration.

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ I now move—

‘ that clause 1 of the Bill do stand part of the Bill.’ ”

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The motion was put to vote and carried and clause 1 was allowed to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2 of the Bill was put to vote and carried and was allowed to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3.

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Mr. President, I would not have intervened in the debate at this stage especially after the discussion on the general principles of the Bill is over, but for the remarks just now made by the Hon. Minister in charge of the Bill. I want to assure hon. Members on the other side of the House, both Government as well as other hon. Members, that the Opposition—the Leader of the Opposition as well as other Members of the Opposition—is anxious that we must keep the discussion at a very high level. But when the Hon. Minister has attributed ‘ narrow-mindedness ’ to the legal profession, because I belong to that profession, I cannot help saying that it does not do any credit to any Member of Government or the Government as a whole. When a Member of Government attributes ‘ narrow-mindedness ’ to the profession of law in which I claim to be a leader, I take very serious objection to his sinking the level of the discussion very low. To attribute narrow-mindedness to any individual or any profession to which the individual belongs is highly objectionable and I hope that hereafter at least it will not be repeated. I object to the Bill and the Deputy Leader also objected to it because it contains a provision allowing drink to the members of the armed forces. The Hon. Minister said that although this Government is anxious that members of the armed forces should not drink, this Government was a prey to the Central Government and that the Central Government (which itself is a Congress Government) might order them to exempt the members of the armed forces in whole or in part. I say it is casting a slur on the Central Government, because they are a guide to the Provincial Government and they have stuck up to the principle of prohibition. Probably, this Government thought, that the Central Government might instruct them to exempt the armed forces from prohibition. I ask why this Government should act in a manner which the Bill does not allow them to do so. There is no reason whatsoever to expect that the Central Government would direct this Government to exempt the armed forces from the provisions of the Act. I never could expect a Member of the Provincial Government casting a slur upon the Central Government.

“ Then, Sir, in answer to my criticism and that of my hon. Friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, it was said by the Hon. Minister that they expect the armed forces to come into line with this Government regarding prohibition on the 1st October 1948. They have continued to drink in spite of your law all this time and you are going to allow them to do so until 1st October also. Why do you want to exempt these armed forces from the Act which is in force now? Government expect to persuade these armed forces to keep away from drinking and they thought that persuasion would be

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successful in a few months. That is why they want to wait till 1st October 1948. They think that persuasion is just and necessary in the interests of the armed forces. If Government think that without drink the armed forces will lose their health, why should they not also take time to persuade the people of this Presidency, the common man who drinks now; and why should they in his case alone think that his health is spoiled on account of drink? I say, Sir, the policy adopted by this Government is wholly inconsistent.

“ Sir, as I said in the beginning, I want to sound a note of warning again to the Members of the Treasury Bench and the hon. the Leader of the House that if these discussions should be kept at a high level, the learned profession of law or any member belonging to it cannot be called ‘narrow-minded.’ If we the Opposition take part in these discussions, it is because we want to set right the Government whenever we think they are going wrong. The object of having a Government and an Opposition is to have a good Government and unless there is a fearless Opposition, an Opposition which seeks no favour, we cannot expect the Government to function efficiently. Sir, if I attack the Government, I am not attacking them individually but I am attacking the policy of the Government. I have the greatest respect for the individual Members of Government as such and if I attack this measure it is because I think that it is inconsistent for this Government to adopt this measure. By my attack, I do not cast any slur upon anybody individually. I know Mr. Daniel Thomas also is a lawyer and he is a particular friend of mine and he wants to render service to his countrymen. I know he is sacrificing much, but at the same time, he ought to realize that there is nothing personal in any of our criticisms, so much so, I once again submit that attributes like ‘narrow-mindedness’ should not be made either to myself or to the profession to which I have the honour to belong.”

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am afraid my hon. Friend Mr. John has completely misunderstood my statement. I never said that the Leader of the Opposition was narrow-minded. I never said that the members of the legal profession were narrow-minded. What I said was this : if a member of that profession were to pick out small holes, the omission of a comma here or a comma there and things of that sort and thereby build up his arguments, then that manner of arguing might be called narrow-mindedness. My statement was only hypothetical and my hon. Friend Mr. John should have appreciated the force of it, lawyer as he is and accustomed as he is to such hypothetical arguments. I did not cast any slur upon him or upon the legal profession. It is his own imagination. I have the highest regard not only for Mr. John but to every member of that profession. That is the profession in which I was bred up and I may go back to that profession at such time when I ceased to be a Member of the Madras Government. I can never afford to cast any slur upon the legal profession because I hope it will be my refuge in days to come when I do not occupy this Treasury Bench.

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" My hon. Friend Mr. John's statement that I am casting a slur on the Indian Government is also without any foundation. Here again I say he is under a great misapprehension. The Indian Government has come as a great saviour of this country in these critical times, and I submit that the very thought of casting a slur upon that Government could not have originated in me. I say this with all the emphasis at my command. I once again repeat that the Leader of the Opposition is apparently seeing a slur where there is none. His argument is that we are pleading that prohibition is good for the people of this Province, but at the same time we allow the armed forces to drink under the provisions of this Bill. Well, I may say, the people of this Province are the people who are under our control and whose administration is entrusted in our hands. In their case the Madras Government pass such orders as they deem fit and proper. So far as the army personnel is concerned, they are not under our control and if the Government of India should advise us that we should not take steps for enforcing prohibition in their case, then we will not be taking any steps. But if we are taking steps now, it is because the present situation is such as to warrant exemption being given to them. If the Government of India says that the present arrangement may continue, it will have to be continued. It is a matter of high policy in which the responsibility is entirely vested in the Indian Government. That is why we provide in the Bill the wording 'till such time'. The whole scheme of the Act is intended to show that this exemption will be more or less a temporary affair till the Government of India adopts the prohibition policy which we have adopted for our own people; and after all they may be pleased to enforce it in due time."

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p.m.

Clause 3 was put to vote and carried and was allowed to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 4.

Clause 4 was put to vote and passed.

Clause 1.

Clause 1 was put to vote and passed.

Preamble.

The Preamble was put to vote and passed.

THE HON. MR. DANIEL THOMAS :—" Mr. Chairman. I move—

'that the Bill be passed into law.'"

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—" Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand here to oppose this Bill. It may be too late in the day; but let us have the satisfaction that we have done our duty by our people. Now, I just want to meet one or two points that were mentioned by the Hon. Minister for Prohibition. The first point I want to draw the attention of the House to is this : we Indians are certainly very hospitable people. (Interruption.)

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I am neither a lawyer nor a doctor. (Laughter.) I know the Leader of the House is a dignified gentleman and if I reply, he knows it too, in a humorous and dignified way. We, Indians are a very hospitable people. And it is this obsession of mind of the Hon. Minister that made him say, that it will be a slur on our hospitality if we do not allow the British people who are still here to drink. Here I would remind him of the proverb, 'while you are in Rome be like a Roman'. (A voice: 'Do as a Roman does'.) Yes, thank you. Therefore if the British people do not want to quit this land so soon, let them remain here in the same manner in which we remain here. If we do not drink, let them also not drink. We shall give them very good food in spite of the scarcity of food; and the Hon. Food Minister is there to provide them food. . ."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"By going to the black-market you can get food!"

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"If the hon. Leader of the House is prepared to go to the blackmarket he may do so provided it only enhances our reputation as a hospitable nation! I would quote another proverb: 'Do not do unto others what you do not wish to be done to yourself.' Therefore if you do not wish to drink it would be very fair to ask the British people not to drink."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"You want them to ruin their health!"

ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"I wish them all to return home hale and healthy. The other point on which the Hon. Minister for Prohibition laid great emphasis was that it was the Central Government which wanted this concession to be given. He seemed to say, that being the case, how is it possible for us to prevent the British people and the army from taking liquor. I would submit that there should be a common policy between the Central Government and the Provincial Government. The policy of Prohibition is the policy of the Congress Party, the Central Government and the Provincial Government belong to the Congress Party; such being the case, it is understandable how the Congress Party which is in power both in the Centre and in the Province should object to prohibition. It is the duty of the Provincial Government to say very humbly and respectfully to the Central Government that such members of the army as are addicted to drink should not be sent to our province.

"Then, Sir, with regard to the question of narrow-mindedness in discussion: the point is we are not opposing this measure for the sake of opposition. On the other hand we feel that such Bills are introduced for the sake of political reasons; they wanted to have power given, or rather they wanted to give concessions, they wanted to save some people from being penalized—certain group of people, certain group of officers—to which we object. We say, you should not give such concessions, you should not allow some

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people to drink, while you are not allowing others to drink. Therefore it is not a question of narrow-mindedness or opposition for opposition sake; it is a question of policy; we draw attention to the principles of the policy to which the Congress Party which is in power to-day is wedded. We say, carry on your policy consistently, and nothing more than that. If you do not do that, we on this side of the House and the people outside the House feel that you are going against the wishes of the people. Therefore I say we oppose this Bill."

The motion was put to vote and carried.

The House then adjourned to meet again at 2-30 p.m. on 23rd March 1948.

V.—PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE.

(1) Notification appended to G.O. No. 84, L.A., dated 16th January 1948, excluding certain areas from the limits of the North Arcot District Board.

(2) The Madras Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1948, as passed by the Assembly and received therefrom in the Council.

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TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS